MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence
                              Community

SUBJECT   :   Intelligence Information Handling in
                              the Community

REFERENCE   :   D/DCI/IC Memo to DCI, dated
                              8 February 1974

    1. Your memorandum on information handling problems
has been reviewed in the Intelligence Directorate and the general
reaction is that the broad undertaking implicit in your recom-
mendations is one to which the Director should not agree. I
agree, however, that there is a real need to develop a more
rational and orderly approach to the information handling problem.
Accordingly, I would endorse your recommendation that there be
an information handling advisor.

    2. My reservations to your proposal are based on several
general considerations:

        a. There have been too many big-think
but ill-fated campaigns designed to solve the
Community's information handling problems.
These include SCIPS, a five-year (1960-1964)
overly ambitious Community-wide venture,
and a number of other attempts--ACSIMATIC
(ACSI), 438L (AFCIN), CHIVE (CIA), DoD's
Worldwide Automated Biographic System and
UNIFILE (DIA). These all fell flat because
they sought the ideal and complete solution
without regard to the world in which they must
function or to their manpower and budgetary

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implications. The experience with these
programs does not augur well for another full
scale assault to meet the needs of all agencies
of the Intelligence Community and the military
commands.

      b. The experience of most participants in
these endeavors has taught several lessons.
Programs should start small; they must involve
the users; systems should be built in increments
that can be tested, discarded, if unsuccessful
or not cost effective, or expanded after demonstrated
success; and they should utilize the state of the art
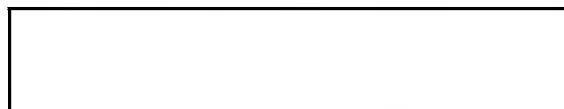in software and off-the-shelf hardware.

      c. The proposal seems to be a one-campaign
effort to satisfy the dissimilar needs of a variety
of consumers--DoD, NSA, DDO--and programs
of quite different priorities--warning and crisis
support; retrieval languages, file management
systems; information needs of military commands.
In trying to satisfy all, do we satisfy none?

      3. In addition to these general reactions, I think that a
DCI imposed halt on further contacts or procurement for existing
information handling projects within USIB would be (a) difficult
to implement and (b) highly detrimental to a variety of useful and
feasible projects. Given the magnitude of your proposal, this
stand-down could easily last two or more years. It would interfere
with ongoing projects such as Project SAFE, the creation of NIOC
and the CIA cable dissemination system. It would cost us a lot in
momentum and risk the loss of much that has been accomplished
to date.

      4. I realize that there are substantial pressures on the
DCI and the Community to show movement on the information
handling front. Rather than opt for the all-out assault, I believe

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we should give increased consideration to restrained and definable approaches with more discernible utility and more promise of early and effective implementation. One of these approaches is the CRS Project SAFE. This project is still in its early stages, but it is a very promising and sensible way to approach information handling problems. I do not regard it as a cure-all or the only way to go, but it does have much to commend it. Before the Agency or the Community are committed to any one approach, I think it would be beneficial for you and the Director to be briefed on Project SAFE, and I would be pleased to arrange such a briefing.

5. The Director's decision as to what course he is going to follow in the information handling field is a critical one that could involve substantial commitments of resources with highly uncertain results. I would hope, therefore, that your proposal will not be set forth for even preliminary Community consideration until the Director has had a chance to consider alternatives and to set his course more deliberately.

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PAUL V. WALSH
Associate Deputy Director
for Intelligence